

REMARKS

Claims 1-4 are in this application.

In an Advisory Action dated October 22, 2003, the Examiner maintained a rejection of Takada et al. under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,203,906 to Takada et al.

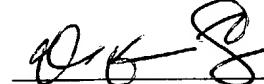
The Examiner indicated that Takada et al. teaches a reaction gas composition of 7.0% by volume of propylene, 12.6% by volume of oxygen, 10% by volume of steam and balance of inert gas containing nitrogen gas being supplied to the catalyst stage, and implied the importance of the explosion limit of both raw and oxygen materials. Then, the Examiner concluded that there was definitely a teaching in the Takada et al. process of controlling conditions of the raw material and the molecular oxygen-containing in the start-up of the reactor.

However, as mentioned in the specification, the reactor is a multicomponent system composed of reaction products, a raw material gas and a molecular oxygen-containing gas, the composition can change during starting up, that is, from start to steady state. Therefore, for example, the concentration of oxygen in the reactor is variable from about 21% (concentration of air is 100%) up to steady state, see page 11, lines 27-30 of the Specification. The present invention is to avoid the explosion in the reactor in such an unsteady state. Accordingly, the problem solved by the present invention is a method for starting up the reactor by causing the raw material and the molecular oxygen-containing gas to pass a range in which the concentration of said raw material is less than the concentration of the lower explosion limit of said raw material and the concentration of oxygen is not less than the limiting oxygen concentration, but excluding the concentration of said raw material of 0 volume % as defined by the present claims. Takada et al. do not teach or suggest each and every element of the present claims. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of these grounds for rejection is respectfully requested.

A prompt and favorable action on the merits is earnestly solicited. It is believed that no fee is required. The Commissioner is authorized to charge any deficiency or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 13-2165.

Respectfully submitted,

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